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History – Rubenstein   
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Best Practice: **Resource Sharing**

***WiiMote Whiteboards***

**Long Winded Blurb:**

In a recent staff meeting during my practicum at North Toronto Collegiate Institute, I watched a five minute presentation by two staff members regarding the use of the Wiimote Whiteboard in the classroom. It was extremely enlightening as well as exciting to learn of the relative ease with which it is possible to achieve such wonderful things through what it turns out is extremely affordable classroom technology.

While it is one initiative of most schools to attain *Smart Boards* for as many classrooms as possible, they are extremely expensive, ranging from $1000-$5000, which does not necessarily fit in to the budget of many schools. However, with the advent of the new Wiimote in combination with the already present projector systems that most schools do have in place already, a teacher is able to produce their own makeshift *Smart Board* for only $60.00. The Wiimote is used in combination with an $8.00 LED pen which is used to “write” on the screen. The software required to run the program is available free online for both Macs and PCs, and is quick and easy to install.

Although the Wiimote system is somewhat fussy to calibrate and set up at first (it requires proper and specific set up in relation to each component, for example: the Wiimote must be placed in the proper “line of vision” relative to the projector and screen in order to “see” properly. Once the sweet spots are found, however, set up is fast and easy), the benefits are extensive. For 1% of the cost of a *Smart Board* it has 80% of the functionality.

As students grow and develop, so does technology and so should education. For schools that cannot afford the *Smart Board*, the Wiimote Whiteboard is a wonderful alternative which will help to close the gap between schools, allowing those with smaller budgets to remain close behind.

**Highlights:**

* For 1% of the cost of a Smartboard, the Wiimote Whiteboard has 80% of the functionality
* $60 setup cost
* Gaining popularity across the teacher community
* Grab It software works is a nice addition for creating presentations used with the Wiimote Whiteboard

**Steps:**

1. Download Smoothboard for free
2. Purchase $40 Wiimote Controller from any Best Buy or similar store
3. Purchase (or make…there are instructions available online) your $8 LED Pen
4. Set up projector and laptop (ensure your computer is Bluetooth enabled)
5. Calibrate program
6. Go! Compatible with PowerPoint and the Mac equivalent, Adobe, etc.

**Technology Required:**

1. Wiimote: <http://www.bestbuy.com/site/null/Wii+Controller/pcmcat92400050006.c?id=pcmcat92400050006>
2. LED Pen: <http://www.best-price.com/search/landing/query/infrared+pen/s/google/koid/9385510129/gkaid/38117600/?gclid=CMO726PTjKgCFYi8KgodmmeJCw>
3. Smoothboard:

<http://www.smoothboard.net/>

**Further Resources:**

Johnny Lee on TED Talks:

<http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/eng/johnny_lee_demos_wii_remote_hacks.html>

Grab Pro Software:

<http://www.traction-software.co.uk/screengrabpro/>

This software allows you to essentially “take a picture” or capture any image on the internet that shows up on your screen. No download required – just grab and go. Also allows you to capture text from PDF files. Anything you can see on your screen, you can grab.

**Advice:**

While the system is terrific, the technology is not perfect and requires some serious fidgeting. Set this up in your own time the first few times, as it can take a while to find the proper location of the Wiimote. Set it up somewhere easily accessible – don’t put it on the ceiling –as sometimes it drops the connection to the computer and must be reset.

The technology is FUN and innovative, so let your students fiddle with it too!

This software is still quite new, but is already very popular because of its relative ease and low cost. This means it will only get better! They already are launching better, improved Smoothboard software which is due out for September. So get excited!!!!!!